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AAAS Applauds Effort to Establish New Diplomatic Ties with Cuba

The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) applauds President Obama's statement regarding efforts to establish new diplomatic ties with Cuba.

As the largest multidisciplinary society that has been engaged for years at the intersection of science and diplomacy, AAAS is especially pleased to see that the Administration will expand travel under the general license in order to facilitate the scientific exchange of research across educational institutions.

In April 2014, AAAS and the Cuban Academy of Sciences signed a landmark memorandum of understanding that outlined a plan to advance scientific cooperation by Cuban and U.S. scientists in key areas of mutual interest. The memorandum identified four areas where our two nations could seek opportunities for sustained cooperation: emerging infectious diseases, brain disorders, cancer, and antimicrobial drug resistance.

The new Administration policy is a critical step towards building new partnerships and to allow for successful cooperation in areas of mutual scientific interest. In particular, allowing the general license to be applied for research and professional meetings will allow scientific peers to build collaborative activities that will enhance our scientific understanding in fields that go beyond politics and borders. Examples include atmospheric research regarding hurricanes in the Gulf; avian flu and the emergence of new diseases such as the chikungunya virus; and the impact of natural disasters on marine life.

"Working together more closely will allow scientists from Cuba and the United States to better share data, identify and monitor outbreaks of infectious disease, and develop more coherent responses," stated AAAS CEO Alan Leshner. "These policy changes will go a long way to ensure a more robust science relationship with great mutual benefit."